

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2002
KIVA - City Hall
3939 Drinkwater Boulevard, Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

Present: Vivian Johnson, Chair
David Bentler, Vice-Chair
Mark Gilliland
David Hill
Mark Melnychenko
Jeff Schwartz

Absent: John Rooney

Staff Present: Rose Arballo
Madeline Clemann
Doug Cullinane
Fran LaPrairie
John Little
Patrick McGreal
Dave Meinhart

Others Present: Steve Beard, SR Beard and Associates (Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Right Project)
Robert Franciosi, Goldwater Institute
John McNamara, BRW

Chairwoman Vivian Johnson called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2002

VICE-CHAIR BENTLER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STUDY SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2002. COMMISSIONER HILL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

None.

SCOTTSDALE/TEMPE RAPID TRANSIT STUDY

Mr. Little introduced Steve Beard, Robert Franciosi, and John McNamara who provided their perspectives on the light rail issue.

Mr. McNamara, BRW

Mr. McNamara provided an overview and gave an update on the Transit Corridor Study, which is in its final phase. He explained that the study consisted of a three-tier process. Tier 1 looked at a broad identification of corridors in which over 100 route segments were reviewed along with eight or nine different transit technologies (both rubber tired and fixed guideway). Tier 2 began to match up corridors and technologies, which resulted in about six alternatives (express bus, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on freeways, light rail, bus rapid transit, etc.). Tier 3 looked at two final alternatives (light rail and bus rapid transit alternatives along with a No Build alternative). Final recommendations are currently being prepared relative to the locally preferred alternative of light rail transit. This recommendation is based on the following reasons:

1. Light rail will permit a seamless connection and the best speed connection with the Central Phoenix/East Valley line and movement throughout the region.
2. Ridership forecasts are strong in that light rail will attract more riders than bus rapid transit.
3. Light rail has a higher capacity than bus rapid transit in that a single light rail train will carry between two to three times the capacity of a single bus rapid transit vehicle resulting in operating and labor efficiencies.
4. Light rail provides the shortest travel times for transit riders throughout the region.
5. Light rail is more cost effective than bus rapid transit in terms of cost per new transit passenger trip.
6. Light rail is more costly in terms of a capital investment, but the cost effectiveness exists in light rail than in bus rapid transit.
7. Light rail fixed infrastructure has spurred economic development and transit-oriented development.
8. Light rail transit also provides the opportunity to look at a phased implementation over a period of years.

Lastly, Mr. McNamara stated that an appendage study to the Major Investment Study (MIS) was started about two months ago to look at the possibility of using a streetcar technology as a phased step toward light rail. This technology has proven to be most successful in Portland over the last two years in which riders have stated that the streetcar is a friendlier type of light rail due to the vehicle being smaller. Such vehicle stops more frequently than light rail and operates in a similar environment in terms of power and trackage. This study is moving ahead and Mr. McNamara will present the analysis of how this vehicle could be used as a circulator in downtown Scottsdale, along the Rio Salado, and in downtown Tempe to eventually feed a long term light rail system.

The streetcar option has the potential of being a phased precursor to light rail and is considered to be less intrusive, and inexpensive to light rail. Stops tend to be less costly and the vehicle can provide a circulator service to support light rail over the long term

Robert Franciosi, Director of Urban Growth and Economic Studies at the Goldwater Institute

Mr. Franciosi gave his perspective on why he believes the City of Scottsdale should NOT consider light rail as a form of mass transit. He believes light rail is costly and inefficient compared to other forms of mass transit. He also feels it is a failure in achieving the larger goal its supporters set for it.

Listed below are some points Mr. Franciosi took into consideration in making his decision:

- Statistics seem to be contradictory with regards to a debate surrounding light rail and transit in general. One of the reasons for the contradiction is often the difference between theoretical performance and what actually happens when things are put into practice. It is believed that light rail can travel at speeds up to 55 mph. This is true on a straightaway, but actual operation on streets where vehicles have to stop every 1/4 to 1/2 mile is at 15.3 mph.
- In reference to light rail being successful and if it covers costs, Mr. Franciosi emphasized that covering costs is the 100% sure way of knowing that the benefits of the system outweigh its costs. He believes that once you move away from whether users are willing to pay the cover costs, performance measures can then be manipulated in various ways.
- A study conducted by the United States General Accounting office in San Diego, Salt Lake, Portland, and Dallas reflects that bus rapid transit is less expensive in terms of cost per revenue mile and cost per passenger trip.
- It was emphasized that when building a light rail or any other transit system, more than just transportation is being provided--Land use planning is then getting heavily involved. The application the city sends to the Federal Government to request matching funds will usually include information about what the city plans to do along the rail corridor or bus corridor to encourage development as it talks about the effects of transportation on street congestion and development. One of the goals put forward by transit advocates is that they want to increase density. It is felt that by increasing density will decrease the dependents on automobiles because more people use transit or walk to various locations.

- In regards to light rail and housing prices, studies show there is a 10% premium for housing near a station within 1/4 mile and emphasized that living close to a station has no or very minimal effects on housing located 1/2 mile or more away.
- It is estimated that a 10-mile line of light rail will cost approximately \$400 - \$500 million to build. Even though it is anticipated the federal government will pay for half the cost of construction, the City of Scottsdale will be competing with other cities in trying to get the government to pay for any transit project.

Steve Beard, Deputy Project Director of the Central Phoenix East Valley Light Rail Transit Project

Mr. Beard gave an overview of the Central Phoenix project and provided his perspective as to why he agrees with the light rail project as a form of mass transit. He also provided some of the misconceptions involved with the project.

As part of the decision making for the Central Phoenix project, the region is reviewed as to where it has been, where it is now, and where it will be in the next 20-40 years. Currently, there are over 3 million people in the metropolitan area. Fifty thousand (50,000) new residents are moving to the area each year, which will result in substantial growth in population, travel, and employment. In an attempt to find an answer to mobility to handle the increase in population and employment, no additional freeways will be added in the core of the metropolitan area—the mobility challenge by taking care of at least a portion of the travel demand needs to be made in some other way.

With Tempe, Phoenix, and Glendale passing transit taxes to expand transit services, a rapid transit technology that carries large numbers of people in an efficient and cost effective manner was considered for one of the corridors in the Central Phoenix/East Valley corridor connecting Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa.

A 20-mile line from 19th Avenue and Bethany Home Road in Phoenix which travels down the Central Avenue corridor east of downtown to the airport crossing through Phoenix across a new bridge over Tempe Town Lake serving downtown Tempe, Arizona State University, and Tempe's most high density residential area along Apache; and moving into Main Street about one mile into Mesa has been proposed. Park and Ride lots at approximately 27 stations will be made available at every 3/4 to 1 mile to help keep up the speed of the light rail vehicle.

Studies completed show that there are potential corridors for expansion or connection to the Central Phoenix/East Valley system.

Mr. Beard presented some of the benefits of light rail as follows:

- By providing a high capacity transit system, it does provide an alternative choice that will take people out of cars.
- Light rail provides a predictable travel time. Light rail transit competes well with auto travel speeds in congested areas during peak periods.
- This system will serve a number of the major activity centers in the metropolitan area.
- The proposed vehicles will run on an electrically powered system that is clean and non-polluting. The powered system is also very quiet and efficient.
- Studies have proven that light rail has spurred economic development. Housing values, rents, and retail sales in the vicinity of stations have increased. Vacant lands around stations redevelop sooner resulting in the generation of more tax income and economic development.

Some of the misconceptions made regarding light rail are:

- That no one will ride light rail and that trains are always empty. It is proven that most all of the recent systems in operation have exceeded their ridership projections in the first year of service.
- The misconception is made that it is more cost efficient to use buses. As Mr. McNamara stated in his presentation, light rail is going to have a higher capital cost, but the long-term operating costs are much lower. The proposed system will have up to three cars, which can carry approximately 150 people per car (450 people per train). This is in comparison to 450 people per train compared to 30-40 people per bus.
- It is said that light rail is not safe. Light rail in transit is one of the safest forms of transportation.

- Some people say that if light rail is made available, everybody is going to go broke along the route. There will be some short-term impacts during construction and there will be some short-term economic impacts.
- People feel that crime will increase. There is very little impact on crime as a majority of the crimes reported are types of crimes where someone forgets to pay his/her fare or trying to get a free ride on the train.

Mr. Beard stated it is believed that light rail is a valuable investment. It can accommodate future growth; can move people in corridors where you can't move them with anymore streets or freeways; connects destinations with where people live; and provides an option for future mobility.

Mr. Beard stated there is an information hotline always open to answer any questions and anyone can get the latest information off the valleyconnections.com website.

The following questions were asked regarding the above presentations:

Vice-Chair Bentler commented that the data provided by the Decker and Bianco study is 12 to 22 years old. Therefore, he asked that more recent data be provided to the Commission. Mr. Franciosi stated that these statistics are census data, which is done every 10 years. Vice-Chair Bentler also asked Mr. Franciosi for his recommended solution to the gridlock anticipated in Scottsdale in the next few years. Mr. Franciosi stated it depends on the issue the city is trying to solve. He feels that to relieve congestion in the north/south corridor, express buses should be operating down the Loop 101 from the surrounding communities north of Shea and Bell down to connect with a Tempe Transit Center.

Mr. Franciosi agrees that the city needs to take a look at the people they are trying to serve and commented that the city needs to develop a solution to the gridlock proposed to happen in the near future. Vice-Chair Bentler feels the communities north of Shea and Bell Roads should connect with a Tempe Transit Center or should run straight into Phoenix. He feels that a corridor from Indian Bend to Phoenix does not appear to reduce congestion.

Commissioner Melnychenko asked which tier of the study focuses on ridership, as he believes that ridership projections are significant in making a system possible. Mr. McNamara stated that ridership forecasts were conducted at the end of Tier 2 and the beginning of Tier 3. Ridership estimates for the primary corridor from Indian Bend south connecting with Central Phoenix/East Valley at the Curry Road alignment are at 1,500 persons per mile (12,000 people per day). Mr. McNamara stated that 1,200 to 1,500 persons per mile is considered extremely good. (These estimates do not include tourists and land use enhancement.)

Commissioner Melnychenko asked if feedback from the Federal Transportation Association (FTA) has been received in reference to the phased implementation from streetcar to light rail in the future. Mr. McNamara mentioned that discussions are still being held with FTA. As there is extensive competition with the new starts cities around the country for light rail funds, the FTA is looking for methods to leverage their funds to provide the greatest benefit to the most deserving cities. Mr. McNamara stated that more information would be available at the time he returns to the Commission to make a streetcar presentation.

Commissioner Hill asked Mr. Franciosi to respond on the Goldwater Institute's position on whether or not they favor or oppose government subsidy of transportation systems. Mr. Franciosi stated that the institute does not take positions and that he can only offer his perspective as a scholar. He believes that the best way to fund any type of transit system is through user fees. He stated that the minimal amount of subsidies in general should just be used in paying for transportation for those people who are poor and not able to pay for transportation. The gas tax as a user fee is imperfect. He believes this is more of a user fee than a sales tax. Mr. Franciosi feels that having citizens pay for a freeway when buying a commodity is not right. He feels it should be based on user fees. He believes the money from the federal government in which citizens driving cars pay taxes on tires or gasoline should be reflected as a subsidy for transit not just a subsidy for highways.

Commissioner Hill added that he agrees with the appeal of user fees for maintaining ongoing transit investment and does not believe it was user fees that established the freeway system, or user fees that make the initial of capital investment on the system that enable user fees to be imposed. Mr. Fransciosi added that the highway system was funded by a gas tax, which is a form of user fee as opposed to a general sales tax. Although one of the complaints about road builders is that they feel they are not getting all the money available to them out of the trust fund, it is fact that the federal highway fund through gas taxes and other types of user fees has actually been spent on roads.

Commissioner Schwartz agrees that some type of mass transit is of importance in Scottsdale, but he is concerned with the huge expense for this type of system and what will happen if the system does not work. He then thanked the presenters for providing their perspective on the advantages and disadvantages of light rail.

Commissioner Bentler questioned Mr. Beard about emissions as to what kind of savings would be made on carbon monoxide and other pollutants by using light rail. Mr. Beard stated that improvement in air quality is directly proportional as to how many people will not be driving their vehicle. By providing a choice of transit, it has been proven that light rail has been effective in getting people out of automobiles than buses, resulting in air quality savings. Mr. Beard stated he does have statistics that have been reported to the federal government over the past couple years that will show the amount of savings in carbon monoxide and other pollutants. Mr. Beard will provide this information to the Commission.

COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ EXITED THE MEETING AND WAS NOT PRESENT AFTER 7:35 P.M.

CACTUS ROAD: FREEWAY TO FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

Chairwoman Johnson mentioned that this agenda item was noted as an action item, but is for information only.

Mr. Cullinane provided an update on the status and issues regarding Cactus Road improvements from the Pima Freeway to Frank Lloyd Wright.

The 90th to 94th Street section and the 94th to 96th Street section have two options that are currently being evaluated pertaining to costs and other issues. One option is to keep the planned five-lane section with a center left turn lane where driveways and intersecting streets exist and to install landscaped medians. The second option is to build the road with three lanes, a center left turn lane and sidewalks, multiuse paths, and trails.

In 1997, the City Council agreed to keep the section of roadway from 96th Street to Frank Lloyd Wright at three lanes with center pavers and no landscaped medians. Nothing has been done on this project and to date, a new alternative has been brought forward to install landscaped medians, which is favored by the residents.

Listed below are some of the issues relating to Cactus Road:

- With regard to right-of-way or easements, staff will be contacting residents to obtain their input on whether they would be willing to grant or sell the city additional right-of-way for the installation of trails, easements, sidewalks, etc. Additional information will be made available at the next Commission meeting when staff brings this item forward for action
- Sound wall issues. With every project, a concern from residents is expressed on project noise levels.
- The potential of whether multi-use paths, trails, or sidewalks should be installed on a particular corridor is also a concern.
- A concern brought forward by residents is speed management. Residents feel that something needs to be done to reduce speed on Cactus from 96th Street to Frank Lloyd Wright.
- There is a concern as to where a grade separated crossing should be located between 94th and 96th Streets to enable a crossing on Cactus

Mr. Cullinane stated that traffic volumes between the freeway and 94th Street are estimated at 23,000-24,000 vehicles per day and that there is more traffic west of the freeway.

As part of the Capital Improvement Project planning process, community dialogue on specific projects are held in an attempt to receive public input to develop alternatives and a resolution on design or project issues. Feedback received from citizens shows that residents favor the installation of landscaped medians versus asphalt. Residents from 90th to 94th Streets and from 94th to 96th Streets expressed a concern on noise. Again, the options for sound mitigation are rubberized asphalt and sound walls. Mr. Cullinane explained that the consensus on projects is to use rubberized asphalt as a sound mitigation measure.

Due to the unsafe intersection of 96th Street/Cactus, Commissioner Melnychenko commented that as a resident of the project area, he is looking forward to the improvement of this intersection. He asked if some design considerations have been made to minimize the number of curb cuts of homes located along Cactus, and how that will affect a possible multi-use path being installed in the area to allow residents access onto Cactus. Mr. Cullinane stated that it has been the city's practice for homes to get the same number of curb cuts they had at the beginning of the project. Chairwoman Johnson suggested that Commissioner Melnychenko attend one of the public meetings on this project since he is a resident of the project area.

With regards to level of service and number of lanes that should be on this roadway, Commissioner Gilliland questioned how the road improvements in this area will interface with the freeway traffic interchange and where necking should occur. Commissioner Gilliland also commented that since recent traffic counts were conducted, it appears that some traffic projections and noise analysis was also done and asked if staff will present a recommendation on the number of lanes on the three different segments of Cactus Road. Mr. Cullinane stated that staff would be providing the Commission with various types of consequences on the various alternatives.

Commissioner Gilliland commented that since staff will be looking to the Commission for a recommendation on this issue, he feels that further information regarding noise walls, the use of roundabouts as a speed control system, and grade separation of trails needs to be provided before the Commission can take action on this item. To Commissioner Gilliland's request, Mr. Cullinane stated that a number of capital projects have generated from the Pima Wall project. Sound studies and projects were made, and a decision was made as to whether such projects should be built. A formal policy has never been generated, projects are handled on a case-by-case basis. For example, the MacDonald Drive project where homes were purchased by the city was an issue that was brought forward to the Transportation Commission and City Council for recommendation. Mr. Little added that staff has been undertaking more of a comprehensive review of noise as it relates to traffic and its impact on neighborhoods due to the Council's interest in preserving the character and quality of neighborhoods. It has been tradition to deal with projects on a case by case basis in an effort to find out what the concerned neighborhood's interests are and what they recommend be done in their neighborhood to reduce noise. Overall, sound data and neighborhood input usually yields a decision the neighborhood can live with.

With regards to Commissioner Gilliland's concern on grade separations, Mr. Cullinane stated that this too is handled on a case-by-case basis. Master planning from a trails and multi-use paths perspective is done resulting in several separated grade crossings being built throughout the city.

With regards to roundabouts, Mr. Cullinane stated that this is one of the alternatives generated and presented to the neighborhoods where they had the opportunity to provide input on this alternative. Speed studies conducted in the project area indicated that there are high incidents of excessive speed. With the multi-use area being trails and multi-use paths, this added some concern for the residents that something for speed management must be done. Due to the project area meeting the initial criteria where the three specified locations on Cactus (100th Street; 104th Street, and 108th Street) has about 18,000 vehicles per day, a roundabout could be considered to control speeding vehicles.

DOWNTOWN TROLLEY ROUTES

Ms. Astin stated that the city has an opportunity to purchase new vehicles for the Scottsdale Roundup. By the city having ownership of these vehicles allows the city to gain control of the quality of the vehicle and could save on operating costs.

Ms. Astin stated that a stakeholders committee was created in which they worked on revisions to the current trolley route. Two additional routes were reviewed and could be implemented as funding becomes available. Input from this committee was also received as to what features they would like to see in the new vehicles.

Staff is in the process of preparing procurement documents and anticipates having the vehicle specifications out for bid with the award of a contract by November 2002. Staffs' goal is to have the new vehicles operating in the fall of 2003.

Chairwoman Johnson requested that arrangements be made to allow the Commissioners to exhibit one of the new vehicles at the next Transportation Commission meeting.

DOWNTOWN PARKING

Ms. Clemann gave a briefing and status update on the development of the downtown parking master plan. She mentioned she has been working on taking a look at all the parking studies that have been done in the past in an attempt to distill them and is looking at what the recommendations were and what the drivers for those recommendations were. Ms. Clemann's goal is to take all the information to date regarding parking in downtown Scottsdale and use it as a springboard to take a larger view of the entire downtown area and look at parking in downtown Scottsdale from a different viewpoint in terms of not just the total supply, but the supply as to where it is located and how it is occupied during various times of the day. A consultant has been hired to do occupancy studies.

Ms. Clemann indicated that staff is looking to:

- maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing system before more spaces can be added.
- integrate the parking system as a whole to make it a system that works together and integrates with all the multi-modal uses and modes currently available downtown.
- link parking lots to trolley routes to make sure the routes serve the parking lots to give people the opportunity to park their car in a well designated lot that is properly signed and has some way finding characteristics to it.
- create a more active level of parking that integrates with whatever district it is in.
- provide some small parking relief through additional vacant city properties.
- identify any place in town where it might have a small parcel where a few parking spaces can be installed.
- make sure that ADA requirements are met on on-street parking and that the on-street parking is striped so that it gets the maximum number of spaces.
- review signage to make sure it is consistent, readable, and understood by motorists.
- provide more pedestrian related activities and links to parking lots for pedestrians so that they can get out of the car, stop driving the car and stop parking in multiple places downtown.

Ms. Clemann stated it is staff's goal to attend a Work Study Session with the City Council in mid October to obtain additional feedback on the direction Transportation staff is taking.

In addition, it is staff's goal to develop a plan to be presented to the Commission by October 2002. The gathering of data and some of the issues being addressed are:

- how much parking can be provided and how can parking behaviors be shaped when the city does not charge for parking in Scottsdale.
- in terms of maintenance in parking facilities, what level of service should the city provide?
- if parking garages are built, how does the city balance acceptable height limits and design versus maximizing the function of the capacity of that facility?

Commissioner Melnychenko questioned if the use of dual parking on weekends or other activities at specific businesses has been considered. Ms. Clemann stated that staff is looking closely at this issue and are gathering information on it.

Commissioner Hill commented he appreciates free parking in Scottsdale, but is receptive to the concept of parking for pay being introduced into the community along with a dialogue on the reasons why it has value. He feels that paid parking is a trade off of specific ideas in exchange for leverage on other potentially valuable ideas to the community.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

GENERAL MANAGER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Due to the Transportation Commission's adoption of criteria used to apply against capital needs in the community that would enable staff to prioritize capital projects, Mr. Little stated that this list of criteria will be brought forth to the Commission in September for re-adoption. It was agreed by the Commission in 2000 that this criteria would be reviewed annually and brought forth to the Commission for re-adoption every two years.

ADJOURNMENT

COMMISSIONER BENTLER MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AT 8:08 P.M. COMMISSIONER MELNYCHENKO SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Arballo
Recording Secretary